

JUNE 22, 1972

Slow rain is falling outside. Showers have been drifting around all morning. For several days, the Shortgrass Country has been wet. Ground toads that hadn't left the ground in six months are pulling off a croaking show. Inner and utter and complete peace reigns across the land.

Private drouths are becoming less of a menace. Nearly everyone has shared in these rains. Until they came, some outfits were getting by on the shade from their neighbor's thunderheads. Stretches of dry country were scattered in all sections.

Screwworms are replacing the drouth bogey. Tension is high in the domino halls and coffee houses. The regulars don't know when they'll be playing their last game or drinking their last cup.

Doctoring screwworms eliminate town ranching and long afternoon double-six sessions. As short as labor is, many an old boy may have to forsake his social life for hot afternoons working the thickets.

The threat of this is naturally affecting domino playing. The boys can't keep their minds on the game if they are under constant stress. Good domino players aren't any different from good golfers. I don't follow white balls around the greens. but I do know that it takes concentration.

My wife has to be reminded several times not to bring up insignificant problems before a big game. Your mind needs to be relaxed to play good dominos. You can't make a decent showing worrying about such trivia as a stopped up drain or a broken down door. That's the reason I take a nap after lunch. You need to be in top shape to match these boys around Mertzon.

A nagging wife can cause you to blow a whole afternoon. Last week, for instance, just as I was going down town, she started another ruckus to burn the Christmas tree.

She'd been muttering about that confounded tree lying in the front yard ever since I'd taken it down in March. From the way she was carrying on, you'd have thought that dried up pinon was bigger than a 40 foot redwood.

I certainly haven't had any trouble walking around such a small object. If she can't side step a fallen tree in a big front yard, she doesn't have any business driving a car on the highway. Volkswagons are 10 times harder to dodge than dead trees. Women get that way after a while; she was just looking for something to fuss about.

Anyhow, by the time we'd finished the argument and I'd promised to burn the tree next week, I couldn't have beat the Vacation Bible School class a game of tiddleywinks. I lost 55 cents before I'd hardly got seated. My partner was so disgusted that I'll have to find somebody from out of town to play with next time.

Screwworms could put us all back to rubbing a lot of tender spots against leather, spots that have grown accustomed to seat covers. Herders are fretting everywhere about the problem. I do think, however, that the markets and the rains will inspire us to meet the challenge. Saving a \$230 steer calf's life would be a pleasure. A man could miss a lot of domino games over that possibility.